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EXTENSION
DIVISION
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REPORT

OF

COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

To Consider the Subject of Farm Life Studies as one of
the Divisions of Research Work of the Proposed
Bureau of Farm Management and
Farm Economics



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
CIRCULAR 139
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Washington, D. C.

June, 1919

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON FARM-LIFE STUDIES.

MAY 1, 2, AND 3, 1919.

In accordance with the recommendations of the committee appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture to consider plan of organization, scope of work, and projects for the Office of Farm Management (Circular No. 132, Office of the Secretary), it is proposed to transfer to the Office of Farm Management (Bureau of Farm Management and Farm Economics) the farm-life studies heretofore conducted in the Bureau of Markets in connection with its rural organization project. Much valuable work has been done under this project in the Bureau of Markets, but since that bureau deals almost exclusively with a specialized farm problem—marketing—while the proposed Bureau of Farm Management and Farm Economics must necessarily conceive of the farm as a whole and its relations to the community and to the Nation, it seems logical and desirable that the work in this field should be supervised by it. The Bureau of Markets, of course, will continue to consider cooperation so far as it affects the marketing of farm products, and the two agencies will work in cooperation where their projects touch.

At the request of the Secretary of Agriculture a committee composed of rural social workers and students of farm-life problems met in Washington May 1, 2, and 3 to outline the work to be undertaken in farm-life studies by the proposed Bureau of Farm Management and Farm Economics. The committee outlined the subjects which require investigation, suggested methods of cooperation with the State colleges and experiment stations, with the other bureaus and departments of the Federal Government, and with the various social agencies at work throughout the United States. The report of this committee has met with the hearty approval of the Secretary of Agriculture and is published in full in the following pages.

CHARLES J. GALPIN APPOINTED TO HEAD THIS WORK.

On May 12, 1919, Prof. Charles J. Galpin, in charge of country-life studies in the college of agriculture in the University of Wisconsin, was appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture as economist in charge of farm-life studies.

Prof. Galpin was born at Hamilton, N. Y., in 1864; reared on farm and in village; graduated with A. B. degree from Colgate University in 1885; studied social science in Harvard University and received the degree of A. M. from that institution in 1895. He was professor of history in Kalamazoo College from 1888 to 1891, and in charge of the Union Academy at Belleville, N. Y., from 1891 to 1901, where he established one of the first courses in agriculture in secondary schools in the State of New York. Since 1911 Prof. Galpin has been in charge of the country-life studies at the University of Wisconsin, and has made some of the most careful inductive studies of farm-life problems and published some of the most stimulating reports available in this field.

Prof. Galpin comes to the department unusually well prepared to give a new stimulus to the work in this field, not only in the department but throughout the United States. Both the Department of Agriculture and the people of the United States are to be congratulated on having his services at their command.

G. I. CHRISTIE,
Assistant Secretary.

MAY 21, 1919.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEE.

MAY 3, 1919.

Hon. D. F. HOUSTON,
Secretary of Agriculture.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: The committee called by you for consideration and discussion of the subject of farm-life studies as one of the divisions of the research work of the proposed Bureau of Farm Management and Farm Economics submits the following report:

We have considered principally these subjects:

1. An outline of the subject matter which can come logically under the head of farm-life studies.
2. Suggestions for cooperation with the State colleges and experiment stations in the carrying on of farm-life studies.
3. Suggestions for cooperation with the Bureau of the Census and other Federal agencies for the collection of data relating to farm life.
4. Lines of cooperation with other social agencies.

In view of the growing importance of problems of life in rural communities, we recommend that ample provision be made to enable the Bureau of Farm Management and Farm Economics to investigate the topics which we have outlined under the head of "Suggested fields of study," without, of course, subtracting anything from the work in farm management in the more strictly business sense.

We recommend also that the closest cooperation be sought with the Bureau of the Census in order to collect more information relating to our farm population as distinguished from what past censuses have called the rural population.

Respectfully submitted.

T. N. CARVER.

O. F. HALL.

H. N. MORSE.

MABEL CARNEY.

A. C. TRUE.

E. C. BRANSON.

J. L. DUMAS.

F. O. CLARK.

Mrs. OLIVER WILSON.

H. E. VAN NORMAN.

FLORENCE E. WARD.

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ELIZABETH HERRING.

BRUCE R. PAYNE.

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C. B. SMITH.

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C. W. THOMPSON.

GEO. H. VON TUNGELN.

E. K. EYERLY.

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A. M. LOOMIS.

CHAS. A. LORY.

L. C. GRAY.

C. J. GALPIN.

BRADFORD KNAPP.

H. C. TAYLOR.

G. I. CHRISTIE.

FARM-LIFE STUDIES.

The growth of national wealth makes possible the improvement ✓ of the conditions of life in farm homes and rural communities, as well as in towns and cities. Throughout the Nation, cities have given active attention to the improvement of living conditions. For many years efforts have been made by cities to provide desirable and satisfactory houses, schools, churches, streets, hospitals, medical service, recreation, sanitation, and other necessary modern improvements. ✓ The arts and institutions of modern civilization, however, have not been so rapidly introduced into the homes of the farmers and into the social life of the rural communities. This has been due partly to the smaller opportunity for human contact in the country than in the city and partly to the fact that some of the city conveniences can not be provided so economically on a small scale as on a large scale. Country progress has been further retarded by the tendency of farmers who have become prosperous to move to the city in order to enjoy its advantages or to devote their means to buying more land rather than to the improvement of the conditions of life in their homes and neighborhood.

Agricultural production has increased materially during recent years through the use of improved machinery, seeds, live stock, and farm methods. Farmers are demanding and should receive fair prices for these products. It is understood and admitted by all that if farming is to be attractive and profitable the farmer must receive a reasonable return on his labor and investment. The economic side of agriculture should continue to be emphasized and advanced. ✓ But if American agriculture is to develop in a large and satisfactory way, the conditions of farm life must improve in many communities. As the Secretary of Agriculture stated in his remarks before this conference: "Merely making farming profitable will not solve the problem. Very many farmers become prosperous and move to town. We must make the farm comfortable, attractive, and healthful."

The people on the farms should have the same opportunities for education, worship, recreation, and social contact as the people in the cities and towns. There should be within easy reach of farm people ✓ suitable and satisfactory hospitals and medical service. The farm home should be adapted to the social needs of the family and should have modern equipment. If paved streets are desirable and necessary in the city, roads in the country which can be used both winter and summer for the transportation of farm products and the easy and convenient movement of the people between country and town are equally necessary and should be provided. The natural opportunities for a full life in the country are better than those in the city, and with the increase in production and income it is now possible to bring into many farm homes and rural communities the conveniences and institutions which make for comfort and an efficient, wholesome life.

In many rural communities splendid results already have been achieved in providing the facilities of modern civilization and in organizing for the maintenance of a vigorous social life. In other rural districts little, if any, progress has been made. It is desirable to study the causes of failure and the conditions of success to determine the actual needs in different localities and develop plans and methods which will help farmers in their efforts to reach out for the better things of life. The following list of topics is submitted as an outline of the subjects which should thus be studied with a view to facilitating advancement in the life of American farmers and their families:

SUGGESTED FIELDS OF STUDY.

I. Rural home life:

- a. The farmer's wife, the boy, the girl.
 - 1. Their attitude toward farm life.
 - 2. Their part in the work of the farm.
 - 3. Their relation to the income of the farm.
 - 4. Their interest in the management of the farm.
 - 5. Facilities for safeguarding their health and caring for them in sickness.
 - 6. Their opportunities for contact with the world outside the home.
- b. The farmhouse.
 - 1. Its structural adaptation to the promotion of social life.
 - 2. Equipment for the promotion of family comfort.
 - 3. Its equipment for the promotion of social life, such as vehicles, musical instruments, etc.
 - 4. Its surroundings in the way of beautification, shade trees, etc.

II. Opportunities for social contact in typical rural communities:

- a. Social gatherings.
- b. Entertainments.
- c. Recreational activities.
- d. Influence of improved means of communication and transportation.
- e. Race elements and social classes as affecting social life.

III. The relation of educational and religious institutions to farm life problems:

- a. Elementary schools.
- b. Secondary schools.
- c. Higher institutions of learning.
- d. Rural churches.
- e. Other religious institutions.

IV. Problems relating to geographical population groups:

- a. Their definition.
 - 1. The neighborhood.
 - 2. The rural community.
 - 3. The country village.
 - 4. Other geographical units.
- b. Their planning and organization.
 - 1. Mapping.
 - 2. Surveying.
 - 3. Organization.
 - 4. Government.
- c. Community centers, buildings, etc.
- d. The relation of urban and rural populations.
- e. The shifting of rural populations.

V. Rural organizations (without definite geographical boundaries):

- a. A directory of rural organizations.
- b. Types of rural organization.
 - 1. Their efficiency.
 - 2. Their principles of success.
 - 3. Extent and causes of failure.
 - 4. Their scope.
 - 5. Their activities.
 - 6. Their results.

VI. Social aspects of tenancy and landlordism:

- a. The cause of tenancy.
- b. The shifting of the tenant population.
- c. Effect upon rural life and institutions.
- d. Effect upon town and village life.
- e. Social responsibilities of landlords and tenants.
- f. The retired farmer.

VII. Social aspects of various types of farm labor:

- a. The married farm hand.
- b. The unmarried farm hand.
- c. The seasonal laborer.
- d. Household help.
- e. Child labor.

VIII. The relation of various forms of disability to farm-life problems:

- a. The aged.
- b. The infirm.
- c. The illiterate.
- d. The defective.
- e. The dependent.
- f. The delinquent.
- g. The neglected.

IX. The social consequences of local disasters due to natural causes.

X. The social consequences of thrift and agencies for promoting thrift:

- a. Savings institutions.
- b. "Blue Sky" laws.
- c. Information as to safe and unsafe investment.
- d. Rural credit organizations.

The fundamental unit of rural social organization is the home. The farm home is also in large measure the basis of national welfare, because it is the source and support not only of country life but also to a considerable degree of city life and leadership. The attitude of the farmer's wife, the boy, the girl, toward farm life is therefore a matter of great importance, as is also their health and welfare. Their attitude toward farm life is determined in no small measure by the farmhouse, its adaptation to the promotion of social life, to economy of labor in household work, and to family comfort. For these reasons rural home life is given first place in the suggested fields of study. ✓

Outside contacts add much to the life of any farm home, however excellent its appointments may be. Very important among the institutions which provide these outside contacts are the school and the church. Wherever the school and church decline in efficiency and in the respect and affection of the people the more intelligent and able members of the community gradually move away and both cultural ✓

and racial decay set in. On the other hand, in those places where the school and the church are progressive and are endeavoring to meet the needs of the community the countryside usually is prosperous and the people contented. The study of educational and religious institutions in relation to farm life is, therefore, scarcely less important than the study of the rural home.

The farm home has relations also to other homes in the neighborhood; to the country village, where most of the trading is done; to the township or town; to the county seat and State capital; and, finally, to the distant city, where much of its products are sent for consumption and to which some of its boys and girls eventually will go. The relationships to these population groups deserve careful study.

Farm life is related also to many organizations without definite geographic boundaries. Some of these organizations are occupational or professional and aim to promote better farming, better living, and clearer thinking. Other rural organizations are of a philanthropic, social, or cultural nature. It is important to study these various organizations in relation to farm life and the causes of their success or failure.

In addition to studies relating to rural home life and to rural organizations, two other large fields deserve careful study.

Farm tenancy is an economic problem, but it also has important social aspects. Much confusion has arisen in discussion of tenancy, which could be clarified by recognizing that in its social aspects tenancy presents two sides, a bright and a dark. Tenancy is the means by which many landless but ambitious and able young men acquire enough capital to buy a farm and enough experience to run it successfully. On the other hand, as retiring land-owning farmers move into the cities the farms are not infrequently rented to tenants less capable and less cultured, who take little interest in local affairs and whose advent results in a gradual decline in the social and educational conditions of the community. Related to the tenancy problem in its social aspects is that of farm labor, household help, and child labor.

The treatment of rural disability—the defectives, dependents, delinquents—is a social problem deserving immediate attention. A study of this problem, your committee suggests, might advantageously be undertaken in cooperation with the Public Health Service and similar agencies.

Finally, the social effects of local disasters due to natural causes appear worthy of consideration, and also the social benefits of thrift and of agencies for promoting thrift, such as savings institutions, rural credit organizations, and the like.

